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Written statement* submitted by Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is hereby circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[2 February 2018]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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On UPR outcomes of Zambia

Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23) welcomes the report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review of Zambia and commends the Government of Zambia for its constructive participation in the third cycle of the UPR process.

APG23 has been in Zambia since 1985, and runs diverse and wide-ranging development projects and initiatives for the promotion and protection of the human rights of children and vulnerable people, including persons with disabilities. Our programmes also focus on the right to food and adequate nutrition and the right to an inclusive education.

Concerning the right to food and adequate nutrition, APG23 welcomes the efforts of the Government in this field through Vision 2030 under which Zambia committed, amongst other things, to advocate for, and develop towards, the ambitious target of 'a well-nourished and healthy population by 2030'[1]. We also acknowledge the increase in the social security budget from 2.4% to 4.2% in 2017, the aim to increase the number of beneficiaries of the Food Security Pack (FSP) from 40,000 in 2017 to 80,000 in 2018 to support viable farmers, and the beneficiary households of the programme of Social Cash Transfer up to 700,000 in 2018[2]. We also welcome the commitment of the Government to combating malnutrition amongst vulnerable pupils through the Home Grown School Feeding programme, which aims to reach 2 million primary-school learners by 2020[3].
Finally, we welcome Zambia's decision to accept the recommendation proposed during the 28th session of the UPR to combat malnutrition. That being said, we regret that the efforts made until now have not been sufficient to reach the desired result of reducing the country's high levels of malnutrition. Indeed, malnutrition is the cause of 52% of deaths in children under five, 40% of children are affected by stunting, 15% are underweight and 6% suffer from wasting. Furthermore, the funding allocated to combat these problems remains insufficient. The Project Supplementary feeding programs are not widely available and most areas are not covered by nutrition specific interventions targeting acute malnutrition and the programme of food distribution to chronically ill people is similarly limited. In light of this, we would like to propose a few recommendations to help guarantee the full realization of the right to food and adequate nutrition. First, we urge the Government to increase their funding to achieve the nutrition goals in line with their national and international commitments; to strengthen nutrition education in schools of all levels and, finally, we suggest an increase in the taxation on the mining sector to obtain new revenue to be allocated to the fight against poverty and to meet national nutrition needs.

Concerning the right to education, APG23 expresses its appreciation to the Zambian Government for its commitment to providing universal access to education. In particular, we welcome the Education For All National Initiative and the commitment to achieve universal primary education by 2015.[4] Yet APG23 is still concerned that some practical obstacles are preventing the achievement of universal access to education. The limited school places available do not meet the learning needs of the predominantly young population of Zambia. Moreover, the budget allocations to education are insufficient, there is a shortage of school facilities, and those that do exist are often inadequate. For instance, maintenance work and renovations are carried out at the expenses of students and their families, and school supplies and educational material are not always provided.

Against this backdrop, APG23 warmly welcomes that the Zambian Government has accepted the set of recommendations proposed during the 28th session of the UPR concerning universal access to education, equal learning opportunities and affordable, quality education. Nevertheless, we would like to propose some specific recommendations

[1] http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/cpsi/unpan040333.pdf
[2] 2018 Budget Address by Honourable Felix C. Mutati, MP Minister of Finance Delivered to the National Assembly on Friday, 29th September, 2017
[3] http://www.parliament.gov.zm/sites/default/files/images/publication_docs/2018%20Budget.pdf
[4] Education For All National Initiative aims at reducing illiteracy and guaranteeing primary education to all school-aged children. Since 2002, when the government announced the Free Primary Education (FPE) Policy, the country registered over 1.2 million more learners, increasing Zambia's net enrolment from 71 per cent in 1999 to over 97 per cent in 2013, but the goal of universal primary education is not yet achieved.

in order to make the right to education more effective. First of all, APG23 calls upon Zambia to allocate the necessary resources to provide textbooks and other facilities to all students. We also encourage the Government to build new classrooms and recruit more teachers to meet the learning needs of its young population. In addition, APG23 invites the Zambian authorities to establish a national schools mapping mechanism for planning substantial renovations in order to upgrade the conditions of education facilities.

As far as people with disabilities and their rights are concerned, APG23 commends the progress made by the Zambian Government in this field. In particular, we note with appreciation that Zambia has ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and has passed the Persons with Disabilities Act.[5] APG23 also recognizes Zambia's efforts to improve the protection framework for people with disabilities and to achieve their full participation, equality and empowerment.[6] However, there is still a rather disheartening situation regarding the social and/or labour inclusion of people with disabilities and further steps ought to be taken to ensure that people with disabilities can fully enjoy their rights.

Concerning education, although the Persons with Disabilities Act provides for their inclusive education at all levels, persons with disabilities are usually excluded from the education system or face major challenges in enjoying their right to education. Among other reasons, this is due to the fact that there are few specialized instructors or teachers and education facilities cannot adequately accommodate the needs of disabled students. People with intellectual disabilities deserve special attention. Indeed, considered not to be trainable, they are denied education on the basis of resources constraints or are placed in special schools, thus hindering their social inclusion. Moreover, as pointed out by the Special Rapporteur on the rights of people with disabilities on her mission to Zambia, individuals with intellectual disabilities are not adequately safeguarded and have no legal capacity to act; they are the most vulnerable among the vulnerable.[7]

Taking into account the situation described above, APG23 commends Zambia for having accepted the recommendations calling for improvements in the situation of people with disabilities and guaranteeing their rights.
We would also like to make further recommendations to ensure that the rights of people with disabilities are respected, protected and fulfilled. Firstly, APG23 urges Zambia to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Moreover, APG23 recommends the creation of more centres offering training and socialization opportunities to people with disabilities as well as adequate and comprehensive community-based services in order to guarantee their inclusion empower them and relieve their families.
In addition, we suggest a mapping exercise of existing centres in order to sustain and develop the private social sector working in this area and develop an effective partnership. Finally, APG23 calls for national awareness-raising programs for the integration of intellectually disabled people in social life, work and school, with a special focus on rural activities.
With reference to education, APG23 encourages the Zambian authorities to develop clear and well coordinated policies for the inclusive education of children with disabilities as well as to train more specialized teachers and to provide mandatory training for all teachers on disabled children's inclusion.
Finally, APG23 recommends the involvement of disabled pupils' parents and community in school activities to share their expertise.

In conclusion, we would like to encourage the Zambian authorities to ensure the effective implementation of the UPR recommendations through the establishment of a permanent governmental mechanism to liaise with the relevant

[5] The Disability Act, available at http://www.parliament.gov.zm/node/3123, provides that Ministries shall come up with rules and guidelines to ensure that persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the ground of their disability.

[6] See the adoption of the Zambia Decent Work Country Programme (2013-2016), available at http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/program/dwcp/download/zambia.pdf , and the 6th National Development Plan (SNDP) from 2011 to 2015, available in link at: http://theredddesk.org/countries/plans/sixth-nationaldevelopment-plan-2011- 2015-zambia. More support is provided to disabled people through increased public spending on disability; develop policies to encourage inclusiveness; reviewing existing legislation; and establishing or strengthening the institutions and the systems that cater to people with disabilities.

[7] UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities on her visit to Zambia, 19 December 2016, A/HRC/34/58/Add.2, available at: http://www.refworld.org/docid/58b00b5c21.html

ministries and consult with civil society, National Human Rights Institutions and all relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, we demand that they make further funding available, take measures against corruption and enhance the transparency and accountability of the budget in order to reduce unplanned expenditures.